

[A New Professional Theatre Comes to McLean](#)

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by Lorraine Treanor

[1st Stage](#), a new professional theatre company has debuted in the Spring Hill/Tysons area and in its own brand new theatre space. Had they consulted economists, the 1st Stage group of friends might not have proceeded with plans to take on the responsibility of building a new theater space in a climate of economic downturn. Marketers might have swayed them away from opening with a 1930's Russian comedy titled *The Suicide*. But the collaborative folks at 1st Stage were too busy focusing on a dream "to build a bridge between educational and professional theatre for the young and developing professional artists".



1st Stage has achieved what has been the impossible dream for many landless theatre companies in the area - they have built a new 110 seat theater in what was once a furniture showroom with little more than \$200,000. "It's quite elegant and comfy." Artistic Director Mark Krikstan told us.

Barely three months after taking possession of

the space, having lived through massive construction (they have videos on their site to prove it), plus five weeks of rehearsals, 1st Stage opened its doors on September 18th with Nicolai Erdman's 16 actor *The Suicide*.

Explaining the play selection, Krikstan continued: "I'm surprised that more theatres haven't produced Erdman's play. I suspect the title has scared many away and even us at first. I read a London review of an adaptation of *The Suicide* produced at the Almeida called *Dying for It*. It was a hit there a few seasons back. I read the adaptation, tried to get the rights, couldn't, decided to read the original, and liked it even more. We found a recent translation by John Freedman that "played" well and fell in love with the script.

Though written in the late 20's, it feels like a contemporary piece—even more so in this economic downturn. It has the feel of a Martin McDonagh play — dark, mean, funny men and women that you wouldn't want to publicly admit that you understand and empathize with."

Having built a theatre in record time, the energetic company plans to keep the space busy with a 5 play season, soon to be announced. Meanwhile, this is closing weekend for *The Suicide*. We'll be there to review it, but why not check out the play and the new space for yourselves. There are four more performances: Thursday and Friday (Oct 9 and 10) at 8

pm, Saturday and Sun (Oct 11 and 12) at 7 pm. 1st Stage is located at 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean, VA 22102. More info on the [website](#).